

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

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INFO AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN
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AMEMBASSY LUSAKA
AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN
AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

C O N F I D E N T I A L GEORGETOWN 1798

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: OVIP, GY
SUBJECT: NKOMO VISIT TO GUYANA

REF: GEORGETOWN 1719 (NOTAL)

SUMMARY: LEADER OF ZIMBABWE AFRICAN PEOPLE'S UNION (ZAPU) JOSHUA NKOMO ARRIVED HERE ONE DAY LATER THAN EXPECTED REFTEL FOR DISCUSSIONS WITH GOG LEADERS. FONMIN WILLS TOLD US CHARGE THAT GOG HIGH COMMISSIONER IN LUSAKA HAS REPORTED THAT THERE IS IRREPARABLE SPLIT IN PATRIOTIC FRONT BETWEEN NKOMO AND MUGABE. IN ADDRESS TO RALLY, NKOMO PRAISED GOG SUPPORT OF RHODESIAN FREEDOM FIGHTERS AND DENIED THAT HE IS COMMUNIST INFLUENCED BY USSR. NKOMO DESCRIBED NEED FOR ASSISTANCE TO ZIMBABWEAN REFUGEES. HE DENIED ZAPU INVOLVEMENT IN TERROTIST ACTS AGAINST CIVILIANS. END SUMMARY.

1. NKOMO ARRIVED NIGHT AUGUST 6 FOR SEVERAL DAYS
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OF TALKS WITH PM BURNHAM, FONMIN WILLS AND OTHER PNC AND GOG OFFICIALS. HE IS ACCOMPANIED BY ZAPU SECOND SECRETARY FOR FOREIGN RELATIONS DANIEL MADZIMBAMUTO, ZAPU REPRESENTATIVE IN CARIBBEAN JOSEPH DUBE AND TWO OTHER PARTY FUNCTIONARIES.

2. AS BACKGROUND TO TALKS, FONMIN WILLS TOLD US CHARGE

THAT GOG HIGH COMMISSIONER IN LUSAKA CEDRIC GRANT HAD REPORTED THAT THERE IS IRREPARABLE SPLIT IN PATRIOTIC FRONT BETWEEN NKOMO AND MUGABE. SUBSTANCE OF NKOMO-GOG TALKS IS NOT YET KNOWN.

3. AUGUST 9 "GUYANA CHRONICLE" EXTENSIVELY COVERED REMARKS MADE AT PUBLIC RALLY BY JOSHUA NKOMO, LEADER OF ZIMBABWE AFRICAN PEOPLE'S UNION(ZAPU). IN 90-MINUTE SPEECH WHICH WAS WELL RECEIVED BY PREDOMINANTLY YOUTHFUL BLACK AUDIENCE, NKOMO DISCUSSED NEED FOR ASSISTANCE FOR YOUNG REFUGEES WHO HAVE FLED RHODESIA. NKOMO SAID HE DID NOT WANT VOLUNTEERS FROM CARIBBEAN TO FIGHT ALONG-SIDE ZIMBABWEANS BECAUSE IMPERIALISTS WOULD CITE THIS AS PROOF THAT WAR BEING WAGED AGAINST SMITH REGIME IS NOT A ZIMBABWE WAR. THE ZAPU LEADER WENT ON TO SAY THE HE WOULD ACCEPT ARMS FROM WHATEVER SOURCE OFFERED THEM. ZAPU RECEIVED WEAPONS FROM USSR BUT ONLY AFTER ALL WESTERN COUNTRIES REFUSED TO PROVIDE FREEDOM FIGHTERS WITH ARMS. NKOMO DESCRIBED AS "ABSURD AND STUPID" CHARGES THAT HE IS A COMMUNIST AND INFLUENCED BY USSR. ZIMBABWE STRUGGLE IS NOT ONE OF IDEOLOGY BUT OF MAJORITY RULE.

4. NKOMO PRAISED GUYANA AND PRIME MINISTER BURNHAM FOR SUPPORTING ZIMBABWE STRUGGLE, ESPECIALLY IN UN AND IN COMMONWEALTH.
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5. HE REBUTTED AT LENGTH CHARGE THAT HIS SUPPORTERS WERE INVOLVED IN PLANTING BOMB THAT KILLED CIVILIANS IN SALISBURY STORE AUGUST 5. HE EMPHASIZED THT ZAPU STRIKES ONLY AGAINST MILITARY TARGETS, AND ALLEGED THAT SMITH REGIME HAD PLANTED BOMB IN EFFORT TO TARNISH NAME OF PATRIOTIC FRONT FIGHTERS ON EVE OF TALKS BETWEEN US SECSTATE VANCE AND UK FOREIGN SEC OWEN. THE REGIME HAD PERPETRATED SIMILAR BRUTAL ACTS IN PAST. NKOMO DESCRIBED SMITH AS A RACIST AND FASCIST WHO WOULD NOT TRANSFER POWER TO MAJORITY, AND WHO CARRIES OUT SEVERE REPRISALS AND GENOCIDE AGAINST ZIMBABWEANS.

6. COMMENT: EXTENSIVE PRESS COVERAGE ACCORDED NKOMO VISIT REFLECTS GOG PREOCCUPATION WITH AFRICAN AFFAIRS. GOG FOREIGN POLICY IS IN LARGE MEASURE GUIDED BY ITS EFFORTS TO DEVELOP GUYANA'S IMAGE AS BLACK ACTIVIST NON-ALIGNED STATE. THIS ORIENTATION ALSO SERVES INTERNAL POLITICAL NEEDS OF PLACATING YOUNG BLACK RADICALS IN BURNHAM'S PNC. GIVEN STRONG FEELINGS OF BURNHAM AND OTHER GOG LEADERS IN SOUTHERN AFRICAN ISSUE, GOG SUPPORT FOR RHODESIAN FREEDOM FIGHTERS WILL REMAIN FIRM

IN INTERNATIONAL FORA. HOWEVER, CURRENT ECONOMIC
CRISIS ALMOST CERTAINLY PRECULDES MORE SUBSTANTIVE
ASSISTANCE.
BLACKEN

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